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**State organization recognizes
Westford's Chris Pude with Housing Hero Award**

DEVENS, June 22, 2015 --- The Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP), a state affordable housing organization, recently recognized Westford Housing Authority Executive Director Chris Pude with a Housing Hero Award in recognition of her outstanding efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing in her community.

Pude received the award at MHP's Housing Hero awards luncheon on Thursday, June 11 at the Devens Common Center. The awards luncheon is part of MHP's annual two-day Housing Institute for local officials and volunteers.

Pude, who is retiring at the end of June after directing the housing authority for 27 years, was recognized for expanding the number of housing authority units in town and especially for her role in the two-phased development of the Stony Brook town land site into 51 rental apartments for families. She was also credited for stepping up and handling many of the town's administrative chores regarding fair housing, housing lotteries and the monitoring of affordable units created through the housing law Ch. 40B.

MHP's Rita Farrell, who worked with Pude on making the Stony Brook public land available for housing, praised Pude for her willingness to go above and beyond her responsibilities. "Chris wasn't content being housing authority director. She knew the town's needs were greater so she helped manage all of its affordable housing activities too," said Farrell. "She's the reason why Westford is a poster child for how housing authorities can play an active role in the advocacy and production of affordable housing."

Pude was presented with her award by Chrystal Kornegay, the Baker Administration's Undersecretary or Housing and Community Development (DHCD). After accepting the award, Pude thanked the town and urged the audience to keep pushing for affordable housing.

"During my 27 year career, I have been surrounded by a community and individuals who share the moral imperative to provide housing for all," she said. "My final message to you is that when you return to your community, stand tall, picture what kind of housing you want to do, keep that picture in your mind and keep your eye on that goal every day because a lot of people are depending on you for their new homes."